

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 314

By Ketron

A RESOLUTION to honor and congratulate the rector and congregation of St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Murfreesboro on the celebration of their church's 125th anniversary.

WHEREAS, it is appropriate that the members of this legislative body recognize those venerable religious institutions and their congregations that, through their unflagging capacity for love, dedication of spirit, and faith in God, strive to enrich the lives of people in their communities; and

WHEREAS, one such dynamic community of faith is St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Murfreesboro, the rector and members of which are celebrating the church's 125th anniversary this year; and

WHEREAS, St. Paul's held its first worship service on October 16, 1892, in a meeting room at the Jordan Hotel; the congregation was founded through the vision of Bishop Charles Todd Quintard, The Reverend Bartow B. Ramage, and leading townspeople to create and sustain a place for Episcopalians to worship in Murfreesboro; and

WHEREAS, St. Paul's lost its first church building to fire in October 1912 but rebuilt the facility within a year with the help of the community at large; and

WHEREAS, during the years of 1917-1945, St. Paul's sought to sustain its witness to the people of Murfreesboro and grow as a congregation during hard times, including World War I, the Great Depression, and World War II; and

WHEREAS, in 1929, the church building was moved on rollers from its original location to its present site, refurbished, and embellished with memorial windows to the deceased leaders of St. Paul's; and

WHEREAS, St. Paul's responded to World War II by reaching out to the servicemen and women who were being deployed overseas and their families who moved into the region in large numbers because of the creation of Sewart Army (Air Force) Base in Smyrna and war-related industries and institutions; and

WHEREAS, in 1949, the congregation built a parish hall to house a growing membership and programs of Christian education and fellowship; and

WHEREAS, during the 1950s, the expansion of Sewart Air Force Base, the Veterans Administration Hospital, Middle Tennessee State College, and Murfreesboro Medical Center spurred a corresponding growth in St. Paul's congregation; and

WHEREAS, the decade also witnessed the development of a men's club, Women of the Episcopal Church, outreach to the college, Sunday School programs, a choir, and support of local and regional charities spearheaded by the women of the church; and

WHEREAS, in 1963, St. Paul's became a self-sustaining parish due to the diligent work of the congregation; and

WHEREAS, after recommitting to its downtown location in 1970, St. Paul's experienced a historical first in 1977 when the church hosted its first woman lay reader and the first woman to preach a sermon there; and

WHEREAS, from 1985-1990, Father Moultrie McIntosh sponsored new programs for enriching the spiritual life of the congregation, including Episcopal Cursillo, a foot-washing service in Lent, and expanded Christian education programs for children and adults; and

WHEREAS, The Reverend Eugene Wise served as St. Paul's fifth rector from 1991-2006; during his fifteen-year tenure, he worked closely with lay leaders to develop new programs for spiritual growth, including a men's retreat, women's retreat, pilgrimage, and a youth ministry, and encourage participation by the congregation in many worthy existing programs; and

WHEREAS, since 2008, The Reverend James K. Polk Van Zandt, St. Paul's seventh rector, has augmented an already strong outreach by working with lay leaders to participate in

new initiatives, including Hearts for Haiti to provide relief after the devastating earthquake there, the Coldest Nights Program to shelter homeless women during cold winter nights, Doors of Hope, Project Braveheart, Death Row Ministry, and Habitat for Humanity; and

WHEREAS, God has blessed St. Paul's Episcopal Church miraculously during its illustrious 125-year history, and its congregation gives thanks for His past and continual blessings; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED TENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we join in the celebration of the 125th anniversary of St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Murfreesboro, thank the good people of this outstanding congregation for their notable service to their Lord and the State of Tennessee, and wish them much continued success and happiness.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.